

here is your guide to

Total Hip Replacement



Advanced science
for real living.™

Total Hip Replacement

Hip replacement surgery, or arthroplasty, uses implants to resurface and replace the bones in the joint, re-creating the smooth gliding surfaces that were once intact.

Hip replacement surgery requires anesthesia. There are various types of anesthesia available and your physician will explain your options to you before surgery.



In total hip surgery, an incision is made on the side of the hip to gain access to the joint. The affected portion of the “ball,” or head of the femur, is removed to allow for the replacement hip component, which is made of a biocompatible (body friendly) metal alloy such as cobalt chrome or titanium.

The “socket,” or acetabulum, is then shaped to accept the new socket, which is pressed into place. There are several materials that can be used to line the socket in your pelvis, including polyethylene (plastic) and metal. It is important to discuss these options with your surgeon. Your surgery will last approximately 1 1/2 – 2 hours. Preoperative care and time spent in the recovery room can add an additional 2–3 hours before you are back in your hospital room.



Healthy Hip



Arthritic Hip

Complications

While uncommon, complications can occur during and after surgery. Some complications include infection, blood clots, implant breakage, mal-alignment, and premature wear, any of which can require additional surgery. Although implant surgery is extremely successful in most cases, some patients still experience pain and stiffness. No implant will last forever, and factors such as the patient's post-surgical activities and weight can affect longevity. Be sure to discuss these and other risks with your surgeon.

There are many things that your surgeon may do to minimize the potential for complications. Your surgeon may have you see a medical physician before surgery to obtain tests. You may also need to have your dental work up to date and may be shown how to prepare your home to avoid falls.

After Surgery

After surgery, you will receive pain medication and begin therapy for your hip. It is important to start moving your new hip as soon as possible after surgery to promote blood flow, to regain motion, and to facilitate the recovery process. You will most likely be out of bed and walking with crutches or a walker within 24 hours of your surgery. You will be assisted in and out of bed, and you will use support devices such as a walker or cane while you are walking.

You will also be shown how to safely climb and descend stairs, how to get into and out of a seated position, and how to care for your hip once you return home. It is a good idea to enlist the help of friends or family once you do return home. Before you leave the hospital, your therapist will show you a variety of exercises designed to help you regain mobility and strength in your hip. You should be able to perform these exercises at home.

Most people are ready to go home between 3-5 days after surgery; however, some people may go to a separate rehabilitation facility, which your surgeon should discuss with you before surgery. Many people will go directly home and begin supervised therapy either at home or as an outpatient. When at home, it is extremely important to continue with your exercises as your physician has instructed.

What activity range can be expected after this surgical procedure?

Diligent physical therapy, proper diet, and a willingness to follow all of your physician's recommendations will contribute to a successful recovery after surgery. Most patients are able to walk without support and drive 3-6 weeks after surgery. Activities such as golf, doubles tennis, and swimming can usually be resumed but only after a thorough evaluation by your physician. Always follow your physician's recommendations as recovery time will vary for each patient.

You will typically not be allowed to participate in high-impact activities or contact sports. These types of activities place extreme amounts of pressure on the joints, which could lead to complications. Ask your surgeon which activities you should avoid after surgery.

Will I need to see my surgeon after surgery?

Your surgeon will set a follow-up schedule for the first year after surgery to evaluate your progress. You will be seen annually thereafter. Complications can occur with implants, so seeing your surgeon when you notice a change in symptoms can assist in evaluating any changes that may occur with your new joint.

Summary

We know the decision to have surgery is sometimes difficult. We hope this brochure has helped you understand some of the basics of total hip replacement surgery so that you can make the best decision for yourself. Millions of others have made this choice, allowing them to return to more active lifestyles. This brochure is not intended to replace the experience and counsel of your orthopedic surgeon. If you have any further questions, please speak with your orthopedic surgeon. If you do not have an orthopaedic surgeon, please refer to the doctor listings provided in this brochure.